

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 EUR-25 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02

CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01

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RSC-01 SAM-01 SCI-06 SPC-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1273

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ENRG, TU, GR

SUBJECT: LAW OF THE SEA: TURKISH-GREEK CONTROVERSY OVER OIL
EXPLORATION LEASES IN AEGEAN

REF: ATHENS 1164

1. DCM AND EMBOFF MET WITH MFA OFFICIAL ATHANASSIOS PETROPOULOS
MARCH 1 TO DISCUSS GREEK-TURKISH CONTROVERSY OVER OIL
EXPLORATION IN THE AEGEAN. PETROPOULOS HEADS UP MFA DIRECTORATE
OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES WHICH INVOLVED IN
DEVELOPMENT GOG POSOTION ON THIS MATTER.

2. PETROPOULOS STATED THAT GOT HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO GREEK
DEMARCHE LATTER PART OF JANUARY CONCERNING GOT GRANT OF OIL
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EXPLORATION LICENSES TO TURKISH PETROLEUM COMPANY (SEE ATHENS

1164). WHILE CATEGORIZING CURRENT CONTROVERSY AS "A SERIOUS MATTER" PETROPOULOS DID NOT THINK SHOW OF MILITARY FORCE LIKELY ON EITHER PART.

3. HE DEFINED GREEK POSITION AS BASED ON 1958 GENEVA CONVENTION ON CONTINENTAL SHELF WHICH ACKNOWLEDGES COASTAL STATES EXERCISE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS FOR EXPLORING AND EXPLOITING NATURAL RESOURCES CONTINENTAL SHELF. GOG POSITION HOLDS THESE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS APPLICABLE EQUALLY TO GREEK ISLANDS AS TO GREEK MAINLAND. PETROPOULOS BELIEVES THAT GOT POSITION ACCEPTS CONCEPT OF TERRITORIAL WATERS SURROUNDING ALL GREEK ISLANDS BUT REJECTS EXTENSION TO THEM OF INDIVIDUAL CONTINENTAL SHELVES.

4. PETROPOULOS READILY ADMITTED TURKEY NOT A SIGNATORY TO THIS GENEVA CONVENTION BUT HE QUICKLY POINTED OUT THAT CONVENTION CONSTITUTED CODIFICATION OF PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICE ON THIS SUBJECT. ACCORDINGLY, HE FELT GOT POSITION NOT STRENGTHENED BY FACT IT DID NOT SIGN CONVENTION. HE ALSO STATED THAT GEOLOGISTS HAVE FOUND THAT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF EXTENDING FROM TURKISH MAINLAND DROPS OFF VERY SHARPLY SHORT DISTANCE FROM COAST SO THAT IN ANY EVENT GOT CANNOT LEGITIMATELY CLAIM THAT AREAS TO WHICH IT GRANTED OIL EXPLORATION LICENSES ARE PART ITS SHELF AREA.

5. EVEN SHOULD GOT "WRONGFULLY" CLAIM THAT ITS SHELF EXTENDS TO AREA IN WHICH LICENSES GIVEN, PETROPOULOS CLAIMS THAT MEDIAN LINE PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE APPLIED (IN ABSENCE ANY OTHER AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE TWO STATES). HE THEN QUICKLY EXPLAINED THAT MEDIAN LINE WOULD BE DRAWN NOT RPT NOT BETWEEN TWO MAINLANDS OF GREECE AND TURKEY BUT RATHER BETWEEN MAINLAND OF TURKEY AND EASTERNMOST ISLANDS OF GREECE. PETROPOULOS NOTED HERE THAT ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA HAD REACHED A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON A SIMILAR PROBLEM ON THE BASIS OF THE TENETS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION. PETROPOULOS INDICATED THERE SOME GOG ANNOYANCE THAT GOT EFFECTED "FAIT ACCOMPLI" IN GRANTING OIL EXPLORATION LICENSES WITHOUT EVER HAVING APPROACHED GOG WITH INVITATION TO DISCUSS MATTER.

6. DCM NOTED THAT PRESS DURING LAST TWO DAYS TALKED OF UPCOMING "MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL MARITIME CONFERENCE" WHICH WOULD BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL

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IN ATHENS COMMENCING MARCH 11 AND WONDERED WHETHER GOT-GOG'S CONTROVERSY WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN THAT FORUM. PETROPOULOS STATED THAT AGENDA HAD BEEN SET BEFOREHAND AND IT NOT ENVISAGED THIS ITEM WOULD BE INCLUDED. SINCE QUESTION COULD EASILY BE HANDLED ON BILATERAL BASIS, PETROPOULOS STRESSED THERE NO REASON TO INJECT IT INTO A MULTILATERAL FORUM. HE STATED THIS CONFERENCE WAS A REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF MEDITERRANEAN STATES AND WOULD BE SIMILAR TO ONES HELD MALTA IN 1972 AND GENEVA IN 1973. THESE

CONFERENCES BASICALLY LOOKING TOWARD UPCOMING LAW OF SEA
CONFERENCE CARACAS SUMMER 1974 AND REPRESENT ATTEMPTS TO
DEVELOP MEDITERRANEAN POSITION ON CERTAIN ISSUES TO BE
DISCUSSED THERE, E.G. POLLUTION.

7. TO DCM REFERENCE REPORTS THAT CERTAIN AMOUNT "MUSCLE FLEXING"
TAKING PLACE WITHIN TURKISH AND/OR GREEK MILITARY CIRCLES
RELATIVE TO OIL CONTROVERSY (SEE ANKARA-1472) PETROPOULOS
DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE SUCH REPORTS AND APPEARED CONFIDENT
CONTROVERSY WOULD BE SETTLED SHORT OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION. HE
ACKNOWLEDGED USG LEGITIMATE INTEREST THIS MATTER BOTH FROM
VIEWPOINT NATO ALLIANCE AND FACT THAT AMERICAN OIL DRILLING
COMPANIES COULD BECOME UNWITTINGLY INVOLVED IN CONTROVERSY.
AT NO TIME DID PETROPOULOS STATE THAT GREECE PLANNING UNILATERALLY
EXTEND TERRITORIAL SEA LIMITS FROM SIX MILES TO TWELVE MILES
(I.E. AS SUGGESTED IN PRESS AND IN SOME GOG MILITARY QUARTERS.
SEE ATHENS DEFATT 271345Z FEB 74 AND 271145Z FEB 74.)
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